



# The Messenger

Middlebury Community Schools

Winter 2011

## Thoughts from the Superintendent

As I write this the local weather forecast is for snow showers. How quickly we move from one season to another and back again. As we prepare to move into the 2012 budget year, it becomes more evident of the impact of the Circuit Breaker and our decreasing Assessed Valuation. The decrease in Assessed Valuation is a result of the local economy and the new trending concept which was introduced by our state legislature a few years ago. As a result of these two items you will see your tax rates increase while the total funds raised by property taxes decrease.

Funding for Capital Projects, Transportation, Bus Replacement and

Debt Service will all be impacted. This means that routine maintenance, technology, all forms of bus transportation, bus replacement and bond payments will be impacted. Because of Indiana law the first item we must always pay is bond payments even if this adversely impacts other services. The priorities the local school board places on services related to these funds will become more important each year. The Middlebury Schools Board of Trustees has continually had a good handle on expenses, so our community should do as well as any in the state for the foreseeable future.

The General Fund is no longer impacted by any local levied tax. The

exception to this is if the local school board takes a property tax referendum to the local voters. If this were to occur this would impact the local property tax rate. Why would a local school board ask the voters for a referendum? The reasons would be to hire more teachers to decrease class size, to add programming for the kids, to keep from cutting programming, to maintain extra-curricular programs and to pay for increases in utilities and insurance to name a few. This should not be an issue in the near future, but depending on the nature of the national, state, and local economy, this could very likely become an issue in the future through no fault of the local school corporation.

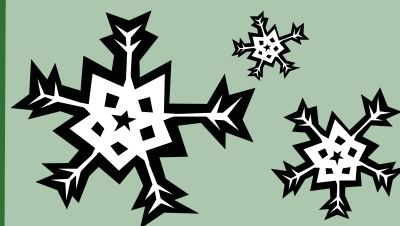
### Winter Transportation NEWS

Winter is rapidly approaching and I want to remind you that your children should wear appropriate cold weather clothing (coats, gloves/mittens, and warm shoes/boots) when waiting at the bus stop. Our bus stop times should not change that much during the winter but if we have a long period of slippery roads; drivers will be asked to start their routes earlier in order to get to school on time. If this happens, the drivers will tell the children and if it is more than a 5 minute change in time, a note will be sent home so parents are aware of the earlier bus time. Remember, you should still have your children out before the bus arrives at your stop, we recommend 5 minutes. Waiting for children to come out of a house at each stop would significantly increase the time of each route and would require us to pick up students much earlier than the current time. Thank you for your help in this matter.

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## Pumpkin Estimation

Fall is a great time to use the produce of the season to make learning more interesting. And what could be more interesting than the ooey goey junk inside a pumpkin?! Third graders in Mrs. Wargo's class at York found the insides of a pumpkin the perfect medium for a little estimation fun. After one of the students picked the perfect pumpkin, the class estimated all kinds of math facts. Could you guess how much this pumpkin weighed? It was 7.2 pounds which they rounded to 7 pounds. That is as much as 28 sticks of butter! Then after digging out the pulp, students estimated the number of seeds inside and found efficient ways to check their answer. Their pumpkin had 150 seeds...which they counted and kept track of by making 15 groups of 10. Who knew estimation could be so much fun!



## YES Brings the Outdoors In

Kindergartners at York are bringing the outdoors inside. Mrs. Miller received a green house from Donor's Choose this month and her class didn't waste any time seeing what they could grow. They planted a pepper plant and watched it produce tiny green peppers that turned into ripe yellow peppers. They patiently watched them grow and then found out that salsa made with peppers is quite good. They did vegetable printing with their peppers and paint too. With the approach of Fall, the class read several books about pumpkins, so they planted pumpkin seeds and are watching them grow too. They have sprouted and are growing so tall they had to be moved to bigger pots! Maybe they will have pumpkin pie later this year!



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## Minds In Motion

Minds In Motion is in full swing at Middlebury Elementary! Every morning a group of students go down to work on exercises which develop their inner balance and eye coordination. Studies have shown that students who cannot crawl, balance, roll, or track visually will struggle more with learning. These exercises are designed to develop these areas so that students can be more successful in school. Students love performing the exercises and are well on their way



to not having these limits in their development. More information on this can be obtained by visiting the Minds In Motion website at [www.mindsinmotion.com](http://www.mindsinmotion.com). A special thank you also goes out to United Way of Elkhart County for providing funding for the equipment to help our students. Thank you!

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## Middlebury Elementary Book Fair

On October 17-20, Middlebury Elementary School hosted its annual book fair. This was a great opportunity for students and families to purchase books for themselves and for others. MES also hosted an Open House night for families on October 20th. During the open house, a surprise guest showed up to sign books and meet students. Everyone loved getting to see Geronimo Stilton and it was a fun night for all! During the book fair the students collected change that was turned into money to purchase books for the Middlebury Food Pantry. Students collected over \$300 total! MES will also be collecting used books before winter break to donate so that families who visit the pantry may pick up a fun book for their child to keep. We are proud of our students and the fact that they are learning to help others. Way to go Middies!

# Northridge Middle School Fall Sports Results

## Cross Country:

The Northridge Cross Country teams had another good season this fall. The boys finished the regular season with a 7-3 record and a fifth place finish in conference. The girls also finished their season 7-3 with a 2nd place finish in the Big 11 Conference tournament. Nice job Coach Gillette and Coach Vasquez.

## Football:

Both teams showed a tremendous amount of improvement throughout the season. The 8th grade A team finished the season with a 2-5 record, while the B team ended with a record of 1-4. The 7th grade A team was 2-5 and the B team finished 2-3. Thank you Coach Thomas, Coach Nine, Coach Solis, Coach Cripe, Coach Johnson, Coach Starcher, and Coach Woods.

## Volleyball:

The Volleyball teams competed hard throughout the entire season and had excellent seasons. The 8th grade A team were 11-2 and finished the regular season as runner-up to the conference champions. The 8th grade B team was 6-3. The 7th grade A team posted a record of 11-2 and were regular season conference champions. The 8th grade B team finished 1-8. Thank you Coach Tackett, Coach Cripe, Coach Shirk, and Coach Miller.

## Soccer:

All of the Soccer teams had solid seasons. The 8th grade boys were 4-4 and the 7th grade boys finished 3-3-1. The 8th grade girls were undefeated in the regular season, were regular season conference champions, and finished the season 6-1. The 7th grade girls were 4-2. Thank you Coach Shoup, Coach Cross, Coach Mounsithiraj, and Coach Smith.

## Fall Sportsmanship Winners:

The students listed below, nominated by their coaches, are the Fall Sportsmanship Award Winner(s) for their sports team at Northridge Middle School. These students were those who demonstrated a positive mental attitude, a determined work ethic, and positive sportsmanship.

8th gr volleyball ..... Kelly Miller  
8th gr volleyball ..... Madison Smucker  
7th gr volleyball ..... Melinda Bontrager  
7th gr volleyball ..... Jaime Mast  
8th gr football..... Brody Miller  
7th gr football..... Conner Smith

8th gr boys soccer ..... Nate Hohman  
7th gr boys soccer ..... Wade Wilson  
8th gr girls soccer ..... Elizabeth Lengacher  
7th gr girls soccer ..... Madison Kidder  
Boys cross country ..... David Prendergast  
Girls cross country ..... Katelyn Kilmer

## Attention Twenty-first Century Scholars

Any 7th or 8th grader can apply for a college scholarship through the 21st Century Scholarship Program. The scholarship is awarded based on household income. Check out <http://www.in.gov/ssaci/2380.htm> to see if your child qualifies or contact NMS counselor Ms. Shenk at 825-9531. If you are already enrolled in the Twenty-first Century Scholars program and have changed your address or the school you attend, please call the North Central Indiana Regional Support Program office at 574-289-7001 ext 6807 or ext 6808 to update your information. Any different information subsequent to the enrollment contact needs to be changed. It is critical that the information is correct to ensure students receive their scholarship award.

## Revolutionary Block Party

360 8th grade students participated in the 3rd annual RBP (Revolutionary Block Party) on Thursday, October 27th to celebrate our victory over the British. The block party was the culminating activity of a joint Language Arts and Social Studies unit covering the Revolutionary War. Students participated in multiple activities to help give them a sense of the time period. Students danced the "Minuet", a popular dance, played various board and card games, including "Shut the Box" and "Whist," tried their hands at ring toss, and participated in a "sanitary" version of bobbing for apples. Students also enjoyed food from the period topped with homemade butter. Fun and frivolity was experienced by all!

# Welcome to the Real World

Northridge Middle School held a Reality Day for all sixth grade students on Friday, October 14th. The Reality Day is a math activity that encourages students to continue their education, make wise choices, know the difference between needs and wants, and recognize the importance of math skills. Several years ago, the 4-H Extension office presented the Reality Day idea to NMS. It was a huge success with both parents and students. Using suggestions from the parent volunteers, the sixth grade math teachers decided to revamp the program to meet the unique needs of the Middlebury population.

Prior to the Reality Day, students studied decimals and finance in their math classes. They learned about budgeting, basic daily life expenses, check writing, and using a balance sheet. During math class each student was randomly assigned an education, an occupation, a monthly income, and a family size. Each student received a mock checkbook and prepared for the culminating reality activity.

At the Reality Day, the sixth grade students visited booths manned by approximately 140 enthusiastic parent volunteers. Students visited a series of tables to provide for the month's Housing, Groceries, Clothing, Transportation, Child Care, Telephone, Insurance, Utilities, Television and Internet Services, Entertainment, and Pets. Students had to make decisions about how to spend their money, while considering their income and family size. At the transportation booth, students had to decide what type of car they would buy or if they would they prefer a horse and buggy. Some students discovered that they did not have enough money for items they "needed", like entertainment and cable television. Some students finally conceded that they would have to visit the Financial Assistance booth for a second job just to survive the day. Students also had to watch their speed as they traveled from one booth to the next, as police officers were handing out citations for violations. Lastly, students had one more dose of reality. They had to draw a Fate card and had to deal with some of life's unexpected events. In the event that a student had money left at the end of the month, there were options of putting the money into savings or giving some to charity.

This Reality Day was designed as an introductory lesson about careers, needs versus wants, and the choices students will make in the years ahead. It bridges the gap between education and real life and should help to answer the question, "Why do we have to learn this anyway?" The sixth grade teachers hope that what students discovered will extend well past the school day and into conversations at home and the future. This special day would not have been successful without the help of so many parents who took time out of their busy schedules to help us. We are so fortunate to work in such a supportive community!

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## 8th Grade Civics Project

As part of an ongoing Civics project, 120 eighth grade students teamed with Feed-the-Children out of Elkhart, to pack over 2000 boxes of food and toiletries to go to families in need. In addition to this large scale project, students have worked a combined 100 hours at the local food pantry, spent over 100 hours cleaning the school grounds and planting flowers, helped run Loveway's Haunted Hilly, helped with local elementary parent meetings, and various other projects of their own design. Students will continue in their efforts to make the world a better place through projects both big and small. Upcoming projects include Letters to Soldiers, Ringing the Bell for the Salvation Army, a partnership with the Middlebury Parks Department, and a Dance Marathon to benefit Riley's Hospital for Children.



## HIS CELEBRATES IDENTITY DAY

## *The Great Grow Along Makes Health Class FUN!*

This year Heritage Intermediate School celebrated its first ever Identity Day. Identity Day was developed to emphasize students' talents, hobbies, and things they are passionate about in their life. Each student was given time to create



a poster that represents themselves. The poster includes drawings, stickers, family pictures, artistic creations, and a small paragraph celebrating the student. On Monday, September 19, 2011 the entire student body toured the hallways of Heritage looking at one another's poster. The students also had time to present their poster to others, in small group setting. Students were able to learn about others as well as exploring their own identity. This experience promoted community building within the school thus enhancing positive relationships.

What foods and drinks help kids grow strong and healthy? Four 4th grade classes (Mrs. Kasten, Mrs. Toth, Mr. Schertz, Mr. Warkentin) this fall did a live-animal demonstration to try to answer that question. Classes studied the nutrient patterns of different foods and drinks, while they fed 2 albino female lab rats the same foods from the Food Pyramid. However, the 2 rats drank different drinks: milk and sugar. Students took weekly measurements of the rats' weights and tail lengths, along with recording observations about the rats' behaviors. The numbers and observations helped to answer that all IMPORTANT question about growth and health, while raising more questions about how kids can make smarter choices about foods and drinks, activity and exercise, sleep and rest. What a terrific way to study human health!

## Exciting Lessons in Fifth Grade



At Heritage Intermediate, teachers are encouraging different forms of exploration across disciplines and integrating the use of technology. In Mrs. Friesner's fifth grade classroom students recently spent some time outdoors taking samples of small ecosystems in groups. The groups then moved back inside to inspect the living and non-living things that each of their ecosystems contained. Many exciting things were discovered by all. The students have also recently published personal narratives. We had a special day of sharing our stories with others from our classroom; the students got to watch a small play written and performed by their classmates and eat some yummy cheese popcorn!!

In Ms. O'Dell's fifth grade classroom, students worked through the process of developing, refining, and eventually publishing their personal narratives reflecting on a moment in their lives. Each student published their final draft to the class blog featured through Kidblog.

org and anticipated comments. Creating an informal invitation, Ms. O'Dell encouraged her students to give information to their parents and family members asking them to visit the class blog and respond to the posts (Ms. O'Dell invited all the staff at HIS to participate as well). By the end of the week, comments had reached over three hundred! Parents, siblings, family members, and staff were making connections and offering praise. Ms. O'Dell's class was ecstatic to see all of the comments. After learning how to appropriately respond to their peer's comments, Ms. O'Dell's fifth graders took on the task of responding on their own. The experience has been wonderful for the students and many are anxious to publish another post on the blog.

## No Bully Zone at HIS

Heritage Intermediate School kicked off the third year of our Olweus Bullying Prevention Program with great excitement on September 22, 2011! Highlights of the kick-off were the “sea of yellow” shirts donated by PTO for each student and the performance of Tim Hannig from the ProKids Show. What a day to remember! Ask any of our students about our Bully-Free Zone and you will know that we are serious about continuing to make our Middlebury community a safe place to work and play.

No Bully Zone Rules:

1. I will not bully others.
2. We will help students who are bullied.
3. We will include students who are left out.
4. If somebody is being bullied, we will tell an adult at school and an adult at home.



Two years ago, H.I.S. kicked off the NO BULLY ZONE campaign to educate our students (and the community) about bullying and equip them to stand-up against it. Since then we have seen a decrease in bullying on our busses and in and around our building. HURRAY!!!

What do our students think about it you ask? A few 5th graders when on the record to share their opinions about the impact the program has had here at H.I.S shared:

“People are including others more in games on the playground even if they don’t want to because we’ve learned that excluding others is bullying.” – Michelle

“The adults are taking bullying seriously and kids know there are more consequences. We don’t want to get into trouble so there is not as much bullying.” -Diana

“This year it is more peaceful on the bus. When someone is being a bully, there are more by-standers speaking up and telling the adults the real story.” -Kole

“The Olweus class meeting times are helpful because we roll play. The roll play shows how bullying might happen and helps us know what to do if it happens to us or someone else.” -Bekah

“Now I feel more confident standing up to a bully.” - Sebastian

“I didn’t see others standing up for their friends on the playground at all before. This year I heard a by-stander let a bully know that what he did to his friend wasn’t nice. Then the by-stander and his friend went to play another place” - Kodiak



As a community, we should be encouraged that our kids are owning the NO BULLY idea and making strides in the right direction. Let’s continue to educate, support, and model the BULLY FREE idea and watch it impact our schools and beyond.

As part of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, staff at Heritage Intermediate School wanted to empower students who have been making good choices. These students were selected if they had stood up for a person being bullied, included students in activities, or demonstrated excellent friendship skills. The good “bystanders” or students who try to prevent bullying were treated to a time of fun swimming with Coach Lawrance at the middle school. The treat was a hit! HIS will continue to highlight more students throughout the year with this “aquatic reward!”